

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01084 212157Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
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INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASYQ PRETORIA
USUN NEW YORK 1247

S E C R E T LUSAKA 1084

EXDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RH ZA US UK
SUBJ: RHODESIA: NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) LONDON 6371; (B) LUSAKA 1083; (C) LUSAKA 1016

1. BELIEVE IT MAY BE WORTHWILE EXPRESSING CONCERN I FEEL OVER OWEN'S THOUGHTS AS EXPRESSED REFTTEL (A). MY IMPRESSION IS THAT HIS TRIP WAS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ONE GIVEN THE OBSTACLES HE HAD TO OVERCOME. HE MADE AN EXCELLENT PERSONAL IMPRESSION AND CONVINCED MANY OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR JOINT PURPOSE. WE ARE MUCH ATTRACTED TO HIS BOLD APPROACH AND WE BELIEVE THAT MATTERS HAVE NOW GONE SO FAR THAT ONLY SUCH AN ATTITUDE CAN SUCCEED IN TURING THE RUSH TO A MILITARY SOLUTION TO A MORE POSITIVE DIRECTION.

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2. NEVERTHELESS WE BELIEVE OWEN MAY HAVE MISINTERPRETED SOME OF THE SIGNALS HE RECEIVED ALONG THE WAY. AS WE COMMENTED FOLLOWING HIS VISIT HERE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ZAMBIANS THINK THEY GAVE OWEN ANY "COMMITMENT". THEIR ONLY COMMITMENT AT THIS STAGE IS TO SUPPORT THE MILITARY FIGHTING BEING CONDUCTED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THEY ARE PRIMARILY PREOCCUPIED NOW WITH

PRECLUDING AN EVENTUAL ARMED STRUGGLE BETWEEN ZANU AND ZAPU ONCE THE SMITH RESISTANCE COLLAPSES. IT IS, WE BELIEVE, SIGNIFICANT THAT AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL THE OWEN INITIATIVE WAS NOT DISCUSSED FORMALLY AT THE LUANDA MEETING. GABORONE'S 904 IS ENTIRELY ACCURATE FROM EVERYTHING WE HAVE LEARNED HERE (GRENNAN, BY THE WAY, DID NOT RETURN WITH KAUNDA TO LUSAKA BUT WENT STRAIGHT TO LONDON FROM LUANDA). FROM CONVERSATIONS I HAVE HAD WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MWALE AND MARK CHONA (REFTELS B AND C), THE MOST POSITIVE WAY TO CHARACTERIZE THE ZAMBIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE OWEN PROPOSALS IS THAT OF A SYMPATHETIC BYSTANDER. IN THE ZAMBIAN VIEW, WHATEVER HAPPENS ZIMBABWE WILL END UP WITH A ZANU AND ZAPU ARMY IN BEING, AND THE SERIOUS MATTER AT HAND IS TO KEEP THESE TWO FROM SQUARING OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER. ZAMBIA WILL BE GUIDED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE OWEN PROPOSALS AND IS QUITE UNLIKELY TO BRING ANY PRESSURE TO BEAR ON IT AT THIS STAGE. PARTICULARLY SINCE ZAMBIAN (FRONTLINE) INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROPOSAL IS LESS THAN IN GENEVA, IT WILL FEEL FREE TO ASSUME EVEN LESS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS SUCCESS.

3. UNDERNEATH THE PASSIVE BENEVOLENCE DESCRIBED ABOVE, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SUSPICION OF WHAT MIGHT BE THE US-UK MOTIVATION IN PRESENTING THESE PROPOSALS. MANY HERE, AMONG THE MOST INVOLVED, BELIEVE THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE KISSINGER/ GENEVA EXERCISE WAS TO POSTPONE AND DELAY EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A MILITARY SOLUTION. THEY SEE THE NEW INITIATIVE AS A FURTHER DELAYING TACTIC. BOTH CHONA AND MWALE ASKED ME WHETHER THE MARCH 31 DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE AGREED AT GENEVA STILL APPLIES. TO THE ANSWER 1978 IS STILL ENVISAGED FOR INDEPENDENCE, THEY
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RETURNED KNOWING GLANCES INDICATING THWT THIS CONFIRMS THE SUSPICION THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE A DELAYING MOVE. MORE SERIOUS IS THE SUSPICION THAT APPEAR TO BE GROWING THAT THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE INITIATIVE IS TO INSTALL MUZOREWA THROUGH AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THE FACT THAT MUZOREWA IS ABLE TO TRAVEL FREELY IN RHODESIA DURING THIS WHOLE PERIOD OF DISCUSSION LEADING UP TO ELECTIONS WHILE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS UNABLE TO OPERATE THERE IS TAKEN AS EVIDENCE OF THIS PLAN. WE HAVE HEARD THIS CONCERN EXPRESSED FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES.

4. WHILE KAUNDA MAY GIVE LIP SERVICE TO SUPPORT FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT HE HAS VIRTUALLY ABANDONED HIS OWN EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION. ACCEPTABLE NEGOTIATION TO HIM NOW MEANS A SMITH SURRENDER. HE BELIEVES THIS IS NOW INEVITABLE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND SO HE MUST FOCUS ON SEEING THAT ANOTHER ANGOLA (ZANU-ZAPU CONFLICT) DOES NOT OCCUR FOLLOWING IT. WE BELIEVE HE SIMPLY DOES NOT YET TAKE SERIOUSLY THE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE OWEN PROPOSALS PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO MAJORITY RULE AND INDEPENDENCE

IN ZIMBABWE. THE PRACTICABILITY OF EARLY ELECTIONS IS RULED OUT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF INTEGRATING THE FIGHTING FORCES BACK INTO THE SOCIETY IN ORDER TO TAKE PART AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT IF THEY ARE NOT, THERE WILL BE TOO MUCH BLOODSHED FOR PEACEFUL ELECTIONS. IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME FOR THE SCENARIO WHICH OWEN HAS PROPOSED TO BE CONSIDERED AS A SERIOUS ALTERNATIVE TO THE FIGHTING. THIS MEANS THAT THE PROPOSALS WILL HAVE TO BE CARRIED CONSIDERABLY FURTHER THAN THEY HAVE SO FAR BEFORE ANY REAL COOPERATION CAN BE EXPECTED FROM KAUNDA OR THE NATIONALISTS. THE NEGOTIATING PRECESS ROUTE NEEDS TO BUILD MOMENTUM AND CREDIBILITY, WHICH THE MILITARY SOLUTION NOW MON-POLIZES. IT IS STARTING FROM ALMOST A DEAD STOP.

5. THE IMPLICATION OF THE ABOVE IS THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE OF THE CONVENING OF A NEW CONFERENCE WOULD, WE BELIEVE, BE NEGATIVELY RECEIVED HERE. IF AN ANNOUNCEMENT MUST BE MADE, WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE THAT CONSULTATIONS TO DRAW

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UP A CONSTITUTION WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. STEPS SHOULD THEN BE TAKEN FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSION WHICH GRADUALLY BUILD UP A CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT AND AT THE SAME TIME A BASIS OF TRUST AMONG THE PARTIES. AT THAT POINT ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CONFERENCE MIGHT BE RECEIVED MORE FAVORABLY. IF A CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE NOW THE WHOLE EXERCISE WOULD BECOME A TARGET OF CRITICISM AND GET BOGGED DOWN IN A DISCUSSION OF WHO WOULD PARTICIPATE, WHERE, AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES. SIMILARLY, WE BELIEVE THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIAISON GROUP IN SALISBURY WOULD GIVE RISE TO CONSIDERABLE MISUNDERSTANDING HERE. SOME IN LUSAKA WOULD SEIZE ON IT AS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE OWEN PROPOSALS WERE JUST PART OF THE PLAN TO INSTALL MUZOREWA THROUGH AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THAT PEOPLE SHOULD JOURNEY TO SALISBURY FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE CONSTITUTION SEEMS PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE. BUT ONLY WHEN ENOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TO CONVINCE SKEPTICAL AFRICANS THAT WRITING A CONSTITUTION WHICH LEADS TO EARLY INDEPENDENCE IS INDEED OUR PURPOSE SHOULD A PERMANENT LIAISON GROUP BE ESTABLISHED THERE IN OUR VIEW.

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